

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

January 12, 2007

Dear President Abbas:

Thank you for your letter of November 28 setting forth your concerns regarding certain rulings by U.S. courts against the Palestinian Authority (PA), the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and most recently the Palestinian Investment Fund (PIF).

As you know, the U.S. District Court in Rhode Island entered judgment in 2004 against the PA, PLO, and Hamas Islamic Resistance Movement ("Hamas"). This judgment was awarded to the estate of an American citizen who, together with his wife, was murdered in Israel in a June 1996 terrorist attack carried out by the military wing of Hamas. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit affirmed that judgment in 2005. Because the U.S. Supreme Court has declined to grant further review, the judgment is final and enforceable in United States courts against property or interests owned by the PA, PLO, or Hamas.

Mr. President, I appreciate how difficult and complex these legal actions are and fully recognize the already significant economic crisis that exists for the Palestinian people. I encourage you, as I would any government, to respond to U.S. legal proceedings in good faith and a timely manner.

The United States is not party to these enforcement proceedings, and our role is therefore limited under our adversarial system of justice. In short, the appropriateness of the United States' participation in any particular proceedings depends on the specific circumstances and the extent to which U.S. legal interests or obligations are involved.

Where judgment is entered, it is also possible to meet with the opposing side to explore out of court solutions so as to avoid enforcement actions. The Office of the Legal Adviser of the Department is willing to make its good offices available to facilitate such meetings. Additionally, the attorneys representing the PIF may

Mr. Mahmoud Abbas,
President of the Palestinian Authority.

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contact the Office of the Legal Adviser to discuss the pending proceedings further and any issues of particular concern.

I remain hopeful that you may find a way toward a resolution of these cases.

Sincerely,



Condoleezza Rice